

A CLOSER LOOK: (In-depth event planning resource)

PRE-EVENT CONCEPT

Establish a planning committee

Planning an event can be more fun with help from others. Ask if others are interested in being on a committee. Communication is the key to a successful committee experience. Determine how often you will meet. Will you hold conference calls or communicate by email? Make sure that all committee members have each other's contact information. Remember, as you go through the event planning process, it is important to involve all members of your planning committee in the decision making.

Brainstorm event ideas

See the list of event ideas included in the 'How to Kit' or brainstorm your own list of event ideas that will help you attract the audience you want to attend your event. Remember, brainstorming means considering as many ideas as possible before you begin to evaluate which ones are best or feasible for your group to handle.

Once your group is done thinking of new ideas, carefully evaluate each idea. Consider your talents, likes and dislikes to determine what kind of event to hold. Keep in mind the amount of time that you have and the expenses that are associated with each type of event. A gala event is more expensive and takes longer to plan than a bake sale. Be realistic about your timeframe and timeline. Also, consider your audience. What type of event will appeal to your friends and family and others in the community? A wine tasting event will appeal to a different group of people than a car wash.

Determine how many people you will need to help/recruit volunteers

Identify and assign tasks for committee members—delegate! Even though it may seem more convenient or simpler to do everything yourself, delegating responsibility builds investment and commitment to the event and the group. People get involved to make a change, help them achieve that goal by determining roles.

Select specific people to coordinate such tasks as venue selection, program, and publicity. Make sure they keep a written record of tasks so that at the end of the event, you can put together a notebook of what worked and what did not. Your notebook will be a handy tool for planning your next event and completing the final review information for NW Sarcoma Foundation. This is important whether you've passed on the leadership to someone else or you decide to plan another event yourself.

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Set a fundraising goal/establish event budget

Determine a strict budget early on so that you can set specific goals that you'll need to achieve, including number of attendees, donation totals and business supporters.

Try to think of everything you might spend money on. Will there be costs associated with the event site such as rental fees or permits? Do you want to offer participants a thank you gift or t-shirt? Will you need to rent tents and portable toilets? Take a look at your budget to see what elements you might get donated from supporters or businesses in your area. For instance, businesses are often willing to donate items for a goodie-bag to be given to each participant.

You don't need to know exactly how much everything will cost up front, but a key part of planning a fundraising event is to make sure that your costs are as low as possible relative to the money raised (a good measure is no more than 25% spent from the total raised). Try to keep expenses as low as possible in order to raise more money.

Set the date/time

When looking into locations or venues there may be limited dates available, so have a few dates in mind when starting the search. Check community calendars to make sure that your event does not conflict with other major events, sports/games or holidays. Verify that your committee members are also able to be there for your event. Consider how much time you have to devote to the planning of your event between now and event day.

Secure a venue/location (including permit, if needed)

Select a venue that offers affordable options for your event. Make sure that it can accommodate the number of people you expect to attend. If you are planning a walk-a-thon or a similar event, check with your town government to determine if you'll need to apply for a permit to use the park or other public area. Please check the city's website for special event information. If you think you want to close streets, confirm process the with your local city office and obtain appropriate permitting.

Use facilities that are available at little or no charge. Use your committee members to help find social, cultural, athletic or religious venues which will provide a space free of charge. You may find a church or community center that will let you use their parking lot or indoor gathering rooms for free.

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Complete third party event agreement form with NW Sarcoma Foundation

Download the online application form. Please submit a minimum of eight weeks prior to event date. To mail the form, please mail to the below address:

NW Sarcoma Foundation
117 E. Louisa Street, #443
Seattle, WA 98102

Or email to: info@nwsarcoma.org

Secure permits, licenses and insurance, etc.

Permits: Please check the city's website for special event information.

Insurance: NW Sarcoma Foundation cannot "lend" its insurance for your event. Please discuss insurance needs with an event insurance company/agent. There are many companies that provide special event insurance. You may want to start with your own insurance company. NW Sarcoma Foundation does require an indemnity clause releasing the organization and affiliates from any liability on all insurance and permits. Insurance verbiage, please below.

Insurance Indemnity Clause: The event sponsors or hosts agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Northwest Sarcoma Foundation and its affiliates, from all claims and liabilities, including attorney's fees, that may arise from any acts or omissions of their agents, volunteers, or employees, or from any claim by them or anyone else relating to the quality, performance, or failure to perform during the specified time period of the event.

Develop a timeline

Working backward from the date of your event, develop a timeline including tasks both large and small. Set deadlines for completing each of these activities.

For example: If you are planning to mail invitations, they should be mailed 4-8 weeks before the event. Based on this, when do you need to have the invitation list completed; how much time will it take to address and mail the invitations; will you need to send a save-the-date; will your event involve working with vendors such as caterers or entertainers? Set a target date for when you plan to have these contracts confirmed.

By creating target dates of completion, you'll ensure that these tasks aren't neglected. There are few things more satisfying as an event draws closer than crossing tasks off your list. A good rule of thumb is to begin planning at least six months before the event is to take place, longer if you're planning a bigger event.

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Sample timeline:

Event planning meeting	Date	Who's in charge
Invitation proposed/invitation list	Date	Who's in charge
Invitations created	Date	Who's in charge
Prepare invitations for mailing	Date	Who's in charge
Invitations mailed out	Date	Who's in charge
PR/Marketing/Advertising start	Date	Who's in charge
Logistical needs confirmed	Date	Who's in charge
Sponsors confirmed	Date	Who's in charge
Event Day	Date	Who is the lead
Thank you letters sent to participants, sponsors, vendors	Date	Who's in charge
Event evaluation completed & submitted to NW Sarcoma Foundation	Date	Who's responsible

Secure community business support and in-kind donations

Consider local business and corporations who might be interested in underwriting your event in return for including their name and business information in your promotional materials or at your event. Donations can also be in-kind. A party supply store may donate the necessary supplies in exchange for putting their logo on the invitations. Or perhaps a local newspaper will offer free advertising space in exchange for being listed as an underwriter of the event. Contact us for a tax identification letter to support your outreach for underwriting or in-kind donations.

- Underwriting: NW Sarcoma Foundation reserves the right to review underwriting proposals and packages for appropriate use of the NW Sarcoma Foundation name, as well as language regarding charitable deductions. Please keep in mind, when approaching businesses and corporations for assistance with events that many local organizations are already involved in fundraising for NW Sarcoma Foundation and may not wish to make additional donations. To find out if a business has been approached for support, please contact your NW Sarcoma Foundation fundraiser.

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BEFORE YOUR EVENT

Promote your event

Please ensure that all promotional materials have been approved by NW Sarcoma Foundation prior to production.

Create invite list

Decide who will be invited to the event and how they will be contacted—mail, email or flyers? Collect addresses and email addresses. Think of everyone you know—friends, family, physicians, co-workers, church members, neighbors, clients and neighborhood restaurants. Enlist other friends and family to help spread the word about your efforts! The more people you contact, the easier it is to reach your goal. Do not make the decision for others thinking “they won’t want to come.” You never know! You will be surprised by your results, and your contacts will feel privileged to help with such a worthy cause.

If you are planning a walk or other event that will require registration, develop your registration and pledge forms.

Send out invitations and announcements

Following your timeline, prepare your invitations and send them out. Make sure to include on the invitation that proceeds will benefit NW Sarcoma Foundation. Make sure the invitation includes the time, date, and location. Don’t forget to include the information about registering or how to RSVP.

Consider sending a follow-up email or a reminder postcard after the invitation has been sent out. Reminders help people commit to attending. Don’t be shy!

Post information at local businesses or online

It is a good idea to assign publicity and media relations to one or more of your committee members. Depending on the size of your event, you will want to consider print advertising in your budget. You may need to print posters and flyers to display in community areas such as community centers, libraries, schools, or workplaces. Contact local businesses that you frequent such as your local grocery store, coffee shop or dry cleaner to find out if they will display a sign or poster for your event in their window. Always ASK first. Post information on Facebook, Twitter, or other social media. Include information on how people can find more information by giving your phone number, email address or the address of your Facebook page.

Email details about your approved event to NW Sarcoma Foundation so that your activity can be posted on the NW Sarcoma Foundation website. Send details to: info@nwsarcoma.org.

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Alert local media

Many local newspapers keep calendars of events going on in the community. Contact your local paper to find out how to submit a calendar listing to be printed in the paper or included on their website.

Write a press release to alert media of your event, and send it to local media outlets, see standard below.

Newspapers like to cover ‘human interest stories—stories about their readers’ triumphs over struggles or efforts to benefit the community. This not only spreads the word about the event, but also spreads awareness about the cause.

Many communities have local cable access channels that are looking for events like yours to highlight.

Press Release Important Information

There is a fairly standard format for creating press releases. It will help your credibility and chances of being published if you present your material in a recognizable format. Template format downloadable.

Invite local officials and celebrities

Reach out to local television personalities, newscasters and other elected officials to invite them to participate in the event. Perhaps they’d like to be the Master of Ceremonies or maybe you could present them with an award for their efforts on behalf of your cause. Do not be discouraged if you receive a no, there may be a YES in there!

Plan decorations and favors

Think of the experience that you want your guests to have at the event. Do you want to have informational handout to educate them about research or education? Will you have balloons and streamers or flowers and votive candles? Does the venue allow these items? Most hospitals do not allow latex balloons, some churches or other venues do not allow candles with burning flames. Make sure that you’ve accounted for decorations and favors in your budget – and stick to it.

Determine menu/refreshments

What food or refreshments will you provide for your guests? If you’re planning a walk, will you have water and snacks for people as they finish? What time is your event – will your guests be hungry for a meal or only for small appetizers? Consider your budget when planning the menu. Can you find a local business to donate any of the refreshments? Maybe the committee members will each be able to bring drinks or appetizers to keep the costs down.

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Secure entertainment and other vendors

Will there be entertainment at your event? Maybe a band or a DJ would be interested in donating their services. Perhaps all you will need is an iPod/online music access. Plan ahead and make sure that any entertainment costs are included in your budget.

Will you order flowers or flower arrangements from local florists? Are there other vendors that you'll need to secure – Audio/Visual experts, security, tents, portable toilets for outside events, etc.?

Make sure you have a contract with all of your vendors. Contracts allow both parties to know exactly what they can expect and what is expected of them. For example, if you rent a park and there is no driving allowed on the grass, put that in your vendor's contract or you may be liable for damages to the park.

Solicit donations of any items to be raffled or auctioned off

Will your event include a raffle or a silent auction? Ask local businesses to donate an item to be included.

If the item will be used in a silent auction, set a minimum bid that's about 1/3 of the value of the item and set an appropriate minimum bid increment. Make sure that any restrictions, including expiration or black-out dates, are listed so that people purchasing raffle tickets or bidding on items are aware of them. At the event, make sure that you thank the donors of the items.

Secure volunteers

Will you need volunteers to help set-up the event, prepare goodie-bags or help at the event? Make a list of what tasks and jobs you will need assistance with, and ask committee members, friends, and family to join in. You may want to create a schedule of shifts so that volunteers are able to enjoy the event and don't feel like they are limited to one place or role all night. Don't forget to designate a volunteer as a photographer, possibly a local photography club or the local high school photography class would like to be involved.

Finalize program/event logistics

Will there be a presentation or announcements made during the event? If so, craft your remarks and determine when during the event the remarks will be made. Do you want to hand your guests a program booklet when they arrive or place a copy on the tables?

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DURING YOUR EVENT

Ensure volunteers have a clear direction and understanding of their roles

If you have the chance, host a volunteer training session. Otherwise, define each role a volunteer will play and assign a key leader to train volunteers in registration, check-in, vendor management, etc. Written tasks help to eliminate confusion.

Assign someone to be responsible for handling the donations

Depending on what type of event you are hosting you may need to have one or more individuals to manage donation acceptance. Create some sort of security for those donations and volunteers, like a Rubbermaid tub with a slit cut in the lid to slide envelopes into or a locking banker bag for a smaller event. Recommend that volunteers do not handle or count cash, have the donor place it into an envelope and seal closed.

AFTER YOUR EVENT

Send thank you notes and receipts to guests and donors

It is important to thank guests and donors for their support of your event. Tell them how much their support means to you and to people affected by Sarcoma. If you provide a list of donors that gave over \$250 directly to NW Sarcoma Foundation, we will send a thank you letter and provide an applicable tax receipt for their contributions. Download and fill out the Revenue-Expense tracking sheet. NW Sarcoma Foundation does not share, sell or otherwise compromise our donors' privacy.

Collect pledged funds

If donors have promised funds, follow up with them for final payment.

Write thank you notes and make final payment to any vendors

Even if you are paying vendors, it is important to thank them for their participation in your event. Organize your notes, contracts, and other paperwork into a reference folder. Collect your notes and the notes of committee members into a reference folder or binder. If you plan to have another, this is a very important step in planning future events.

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Your folder or binder should include:

- copies of all contracts
- contact information for all committee members, vendors, and suppliers
- the final menu and program
- a list of all donors, guest, and sponsors (so that you'll be able to easily ask them to renew their support next year)
- the final budget worksheet

Complete financial summary

Please complete the financial summary and fundraising feedback form, download the form.

Send the proceeds to NW Sarcoma Foundation

- Send the proceeds to NW Sarcoma Foundation or make arrangements to deliver in person. If writing a check please make payable to NW Sarcoma Foundation and mail to the address below. Please DO NOT send cash in the mail. If you have cash to hand-in, please make arrangements to deliver in person within two weeks of your event.

NW Sarcoma Foundation
117 E Louisa Street, #443
Seattle, WA 98102

Make sure to include the financial summary and fundraising feedback form that shows an accounting of event revenues and expenses. Don't forget to make a copy for yourself!

CELEBRATE! You did it!

You are an important part of NW Sarcoma Foundation's success.

THANK YOU!